

Recycling Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Minutes  
October 13, 2021, 8 am – 9:30 am  
Virtual Meeting Minute Taker: Sakiko Isomichi

**Members present:** Catrina Damrell, Shirley Elliot, Debby Galef, Martha Henry, Sakiko Isomichi, Susy Jones, Debby Knight, Scott MacGrath, Janet Mosley, Audrey Ng, Richard Nurse, Diane Roseman, Meera Singh, Mary Verhage

**Members absent:** Ilana Bebachick, Leah Beckett, Holden Cookson, Laura Nichols, Quinten Steenhuis

**Staff Present:** Mike Orr

**Public present:** Dailey Brannen, Helen Snively

- (Slow start: took a little bit to meet the quorum)
- New quorum: 9
  - Kristin is stepping down
  - Dailey from Harvard recycling and waste will be attending meetings
- September minutes approved
- Susy and Scott remain co-chairs, Debby Galef secretary
- Video for Rob to appreciate his work for RAC

1. City Updates

- Textile recycling
  - Issues vary
    - “Dumping in developing countries” isn’t accurate. Situation is market oriented
      - Used as they are via Salvation Army, etc.
      - Recycled into padding and insulation
  - Reuse preferred
  - Value in collecting textiles?
    - 7% of our trash is textiles – huge value
    - That is why there are going to be options to do curbside and bin collections for free and then the company (most likely Helpsy) will cut a check for the city or other places that request to host a bin.
    - Will be important for RAC members to talk about our new program
  - Somerville uses Simple Recycling, but not enough residents know about it - they’ve now changed their model and appointments need to be made for curbside collection, any bags may be used
  - How to reach out to apartment residents

- Do outreach through property managers
  - Apartments are the hardest nut to crack not only for textiles but also for compost, e-waste, etc.
  - Send out postcards about new trash barrels as well as textiles and composting and try to reach as many people as possible
- High schoolers' role can be big
  - "Glocal," "Stars," or other programs run by high school
  - Will be great to work students into the outreach
  - Tricky with thrift stores: they work with companies
    - If people want to donate, they should continue to do it. We don't want to put thrift stores out of business.
- (Chat: The EPA has amazing data on municipal solid waste. The direct link doesn't appear, but I just googled textile waste data US and it went right to a page on material-specific textile data.)
- Helpsy: middle company that collects, categorizes collected textiles, and sends them to different places abroad
  - Beware of the term, "upcycle"
  - Critical: the collective effort
- Communication methods: postcards, waste mailers
  - "Softer rollout" since it won't be a "textile season"
  - Is Helpsy advertising appropriate or possible? – may be tricky for city
  - Advertising at the source, i.e. stores?
- Will be available on the Zero waste app
  - Clothing is among most searched items: when someone searches, they'll learn about the textile collection program
- 3. Re-aligning sub-committee goals: Presentation presented by Susy; see [here](#).
  - Take a step back: high level goals for the city and RAC (Susy's slides)
    - Tools: education, outreach, policy recommendations, analytics
      - Think: what are we good at?
    - Goal: 80% reduction of waste by 2050 (2008 baseline)
    - Promote new culture around consumption
    - Support city programs
      - Food waste & yard waste
      - Recycle center
      - Textile recycling
      - Mattress recycling
      - Small business recycling/composting
      - Support recycling related bills
    - Last year
      - Analysis: survey
      - Food waste: monthly newsletter
      - Reuse
    - Rob's parting thoughts on future RAC
      - New fixed-sized trash

- Single-use plastic ware
    - A culture of reuse for durables
    - Public messaging (food scraps instead of compost)
  - Brainstorm
    - Textile recycling
    - Communications, communications, communications
    - What happens to trash totes
    - Rodents
      - How does food waste connect to rodent issues?
    - New legislation, e.g. bottle bill
    - Covid-related best practices
    - Data collection
    - Neighborhood communication
  - September: highest tonnage for recycling, largest seen in the long time
  - Complicated to assess the current situation on food waste
  - Subcommittee structure reconsidered
    - Analytics
    - Food waste
    - Reuse – focus on textiles
    - Policy?
    - Communications?
  - Suggestions for 3 subcommittees (keep it 3 since there are fewer members)
    - Analytics, reuse, communications
    - Food waste; policy/communications, textiles/reuse
4. Public comment
- Dailey would love to be part of a subcommittee
5. Action Items
- Mike will work on the video for Rob
  - RAC members submit their videos to Mike in Google folder: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dZu6zN7m16UqVg3Ocr3mVRaapymSWpYL?usp=sharing> by the end of the month
    - Send him an email if people can't find it
  - Mike will look into whether Helpsy's advertising possible
  - Susy will draft the survey for subcommittees/subcommittee chairs
  - Everyone will fill out the survey from Susy
6. Closing
- Volunteer opportunities
    - Email Camilla if people are interested
  - Find replacement for Rob?
    - Need to publicly search for members, and the committee may increase
    - Is there a way to file for a special permit to include Dailey?